

**HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION  
FULL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES  
January 31, 2007, 4:30 p.m.  
Council Chambers**

**PRESENT**

Trena Carter  
Ian Kohen  
Greg Lewis  
Tony McClendon  
Akua Ofori-Boateng  
Gil Palmer  
John Roberts  
John Stroh

**ABSENT**

Jay Myers  
Jason Staley  
Wes Roy

**\*\*\* Meeting Called to Order \*\*\***

**VISITORS:** Tammie LeClerc, Joie Ayala, Oscar Fernandez, John Otto, Cody Hobbs with several family members and friends.

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Director Arlette Tinsley, Deputy Director Lorraine Smith and Secretary, Lula Young.

**SECRETARY'S REPORT:**

Secretary Roberts called roll. **Commissioner McClendon moved to accept the December Minutes as submitted, Commissioner Stroh seconded. Motion carried.**

**TREASURER'S REPORT:**

Commissioner Lewis reported the beginning balance, as of December 21, 2006, as \$4,765.74. One payment of \$8.00 was received as payment for the purchase an oral history video leaving the January balance at \$4,773.74.

**DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

Director Tinsley advised Commissioners that since their passage of the amendment to the Rules and Regulations, the office call log database has been modified to include age, gender identity and sexual orientation to allow for accurate reporting. An example of the new log was provided to each commissioner. Director Tinsley informed Commissioners of the extensive work Deputy Director Smith has completed on the new brochure, website language and complaint form. A copy of the updated documents will be provided to Commissioners upon completion.

In response to Chairperson Palmer's inquiry, Director Tinsley reported that since the changes, one sexual orientation complaint had been received in response to a statement published in the newspaper that a community member felt was threatening to gays and lesbians. Appropriate referrals were made to Brian Wilder with the police department so that a report would be on file with both offices.

Director Tinsley continued her overview of the first community forum on immigration issues that she and Commissioners attended the previous night. The forums are a collaborative effort by the Human Rights Commission, Leadership Bartholomew County, Columbus Community Development, the Immigration Issues Forum, led by Laura Hurt, and Eastside Community Center. Director Tinsley advised that the session was well-attended with standing room only and was so well-received that an offer to sponsor the next forum was received from one leader of a local corporation. The speaker was exceptional and allowed additional time for questions. The office will have the session on DVD when it becomes available. There are two remaining forum sessions. The next topic is on economics and diversity. The last forum will be on the ethical and moral implications of immigration, facilitated by an I. U. – Bloomington Chaplain who interviewed Director Tinsley on emerging Latina leaders (Laura Hurt and Juana Watson).

Director Tinsley shared her recent interaction with Julie Morison, a research project associate who is funded by Irwin Financial Management Association to identify barriers to graduation for Latino youth. The project is titled, "Logrando Secundaria". Ms. Morison has completed interviewing all ESL students in both high schools and the students described one consistent barrier: being subjected to daily or weekly harassment based on their national origin. The Director advised that she has met with Ms. Morison and reviewed the various policies and information about what schools are doing and what else can be done to help Latino youth graduate from high school. She will be giving a report to Irwin management and other companies in town regarding her research.

Director Tinsley shared with Commissioners the recent reports received from parents, teachers and volunteers about Latino students being denied access to C4 classes based on English proficiency. Students wanting to sign up for C4 classes are being told they cannot. The Office of Civil Rights (OCR) guidelines for education specifically state that language cannot be one factor in denying student access to C4/vocational education courses. After meeting with BCSC administrators, the school system is working proactively to resolve this issue.

### **OPEN FORUM/CURRENT EVENTS & COMMUNITY CONCERNS:**

Tammie LeClerc and Joie Ayala were in attendance with three student participants in the Talks Mentoring Program who enjoyed the field trip to Kidscommons sponsored by the Commission. The participants in attendance were Oscar Fernandez and father; Cody Hobbs, attending with his mother and sister and John Otto and guest. The students are seventh graders and thanked Commissioners for providing the opportunity for them to visit Kidscommons. Mrs. LeClerc and Mrs. Ayala shared a PowerPoint presentation of the trip. The students also gave brief comments about their experiences on the field trip.

### **ANNUAL DINNER/SPEAKER:**

Each Commissioner discussed their top three choices for keynote speaker after submitting their choices. Chairperson Palmer asked that Commissioners consider a speaker for the 2008 dinner in order to have the speaker selection completed earlier in the process.

**Commissioner Kohen moved to first approach Judy Shepard; Berenice Ruhl, second and Lori Wilson, third to speak at the 2007 Annual Dinner. Commissioner John Stroh seconded. Motion carried.**

Chairperson Palmer suggested that if Judy Shepard accepts the invitation for the 2007 keynote address that Lori Wilson be immediately approached as the 2008 Dinner Speaker and Jarvis Cooper as the next choice if she is unavailable.

Commissioners continued their discussion including speaker fees, honorariums and related costs.

#### **NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE/SLATE OF OFFICERS FOR 2007-08:**

Director Tinsley spoke on behalf of Vice-Chairperson Jay Myers and submitted his request that Chairperson Palmer form the nominating committee on his behalf that includes the vice-chair and two volunteers. Commissioners McClendon and Ofori-Boateng volunteered to serve on the nominating committee.

#### **ADJOURN:**

**Commissioner McClendon moved to adjourn the meeting, Commissioner Lewis seconded. Meeting adjourned.**